demo
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serendipity

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# *WHAT IS 'SERENDIPITY'?*

AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY OF HAPPINESS. DISCOVERING AN ALBUM THROUGH A LONG, LOST FRIEND. DRUNKENLY STUMBLING UPON YOUR NEW FAVORITE BAND AT A BAR. HEARING YOUR NEW FAVORITE SONG PLAYING AT YOUR LOCAL SUPERMARKET. *SERENDIPITY* REPRESENTS THE MUNDANE, SMALL THINGS IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU SOMETIMES FAIL TO NOTICE UNTIL YOU THINK ABOUT IT DEEPLY, REALIZING THAT SOMETHING SEEMINGLY INSIGNIFICANT SHAPES AND MOLDS THE TRAJECTORY OF WHO YOU ARE. IN DEMO, WE EXPLORE *SERENDIPITY* IN MUSIC—ELEMENTS OF RANDOM CHANCE THAT DEFINE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSIC AND HOW THAT BLEEDS INTO EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE. FROM STORIES OF MICROSCOPIC PERSONAL ANECDOTES ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE VERY NATURE OF MUSIC IN ITSELF, *SERENDIPITY* IS WHAT DEFINES AND NURTURES MUSIC.

# here we are... again!

Wow, so this is what it feels like? A 36-page magazine under our belt and yet, this year rings a bit different. Perhaps it's the catharsis from formulating and actualizing a conceptual work, the latent fulfilment from a totality's grandeur! Though, I shouldn't get ahead of myself. No matter how you cut it, this year was ironically rough for "the year of serendipity" (for evidence, please visit my article). As **Aya** and I strayed from each other due to personal obligations, the crumbling of the Yoo-Kobayashi dynasty felt palpable. Hopeless and forlorn, I shook my fist at the sky, asking, no demanding, the Serendipity I was entitled to.

... Is it too late to mention I have a flare for the melodramatic? In all seriousness, this issue is a celebration of the little things we forget to appreciate. I'm going to sound corny and honestly, what of it? The absence of Serendipity (i.e., actual academic rigor and a minimum-wage job), only reinvigorated my belief in a life outside the 4 walls of Innis 'Deluxe' Screening Room. Since my hard-launch as co-editor mid-semester of 2022-2023, Demo has been my serendipity. As a proverbial refuge for variable music nerds to express themselves freely and yammer days on end, I find myself lucky to even witness it. Sure, it's work, but it's work that matters. This isn't a 3000-word political science paper that'll be mass-deleted after grading, these are real opinions, real feelings, real people. Never would I have imagined myself as a student leader at UofT, but with mere weeks 'till my 'retirement,' here I find myself willing to do anything for anyone willing to take a chance on two over-ambitious Political Science majors.

*Thank you* so much, **Aya** for taking a chance on me. You saw a potential that I couldn't fathom and pushed me to be the best iteration of myself I could be. To think we constituted a dynasty, a friendship that has outlasted the arduous test of working together - it's something I'd do all over again. To our future: **Jonah**, **Hayden**, **Jane**, and **Finch**, we appointed you because we wholeheartedly believe y'all will lead a wonderful new chapter of Demo (p.s., you are allowed to submit the mag 1-2 weeks late, it'll still be **Nicole's** problem). To our Hart House family: **Ethan**, **Juni**, **Nicole**, **Kez**, **Helner**, and **Demi**, *thank you* for being the best friends I could've asked for and being patient with our erraticness! Finally, *thank you* to all the writers, photographers, designers, and most importantly, friends of Demo for allowing us to do what we do. I sincerely hope, from the bottom of my heart, that you have found value in yourself or your work because everyone deserves a lil serendipity in their lives.

Andrew Yoo

4th year, Co-Editor-in-Chief

# hi. how are you?

**The feeling of organizing a magazine is always new**, no matter how many times I've done it (to be fair, I've only done it twice, but hey, you learn as you go). Even if I have the past to look to when I feel lost, the pressure is always there. *Follow up: reply when you can. Where's 'x' or 'y' and when are you going to send it to us? How's it going? We're worried.* The key difference is that I'm a different person despite it only being a year since. There are twelve months' worth of new memories, experiences, struggles, and circumstances that beget my current life, yet one of the constants that remain is my involvement with *Demo*.

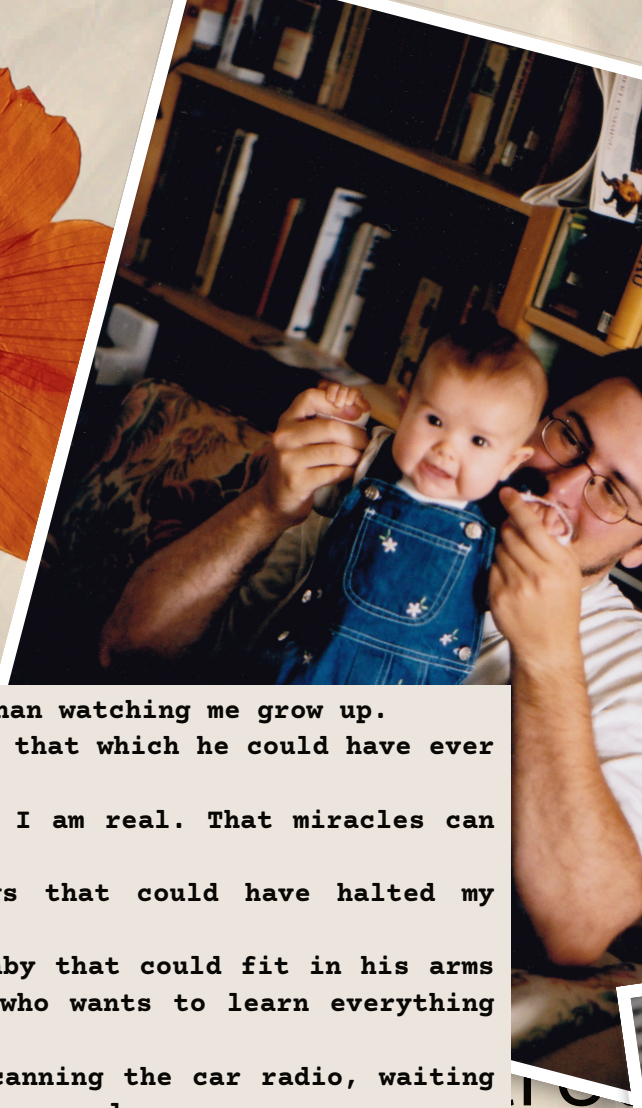
This issue is personal. It tells the story of our lives and how that intertwines with music. To me, that relationship has been entrenched with *Demo*, and if I were to go back in time to change things, I would leave this chapter in my life unscathed. These little happenstances have the power and driving force to change your life, and as cheesy as it sounds, being a part of *Demo* has changed mine drastically. To glue yourself to the myopia of "what ifs" is often a waste of time, but whenever I think about a scenario where I had turned Eram and Marina's offer down to become co-editor, I doubt the trajectory of my life would've gone in the way I had hoped—no, dreamed—it would be.

Thank you so much, **Andrew**, for being with me for a second time. I couldn't have imagined anyone to co-edit *Demo* with, and I know in my heart that we will still talk in all-caps about deadlines, life events, and all things *Demo* despite graduating from UofT. To **Hayden**, thank you so much for your efforts this year. You made things a lot easier on our end. **Jonah**, **Jane**, and **Finch**, you'll do amazing next year. Each of you has a varying set of skills that will surely add a new type of flavor to the *Demo* that was under Andrew and I. To the **writers**, **designers**, **photographers**, and **personnel** who made this issue tangible and palpable, I hope you know that your efforts are the backbone of *Demo*. To the **Hart House Music Committee members**—namely, **Nicole**, **Demi**, **Ethan**, **Helner**, **Kez**, and **Juni**—thank you for always keeping up with us and giving us a constant barrage of emotional support, even though we're not the best at meeting deadlines. Lastly, thank you, the **readers**, for deciding to read *Serendipity*. I hope you find your serendipity through us, *Demo*.

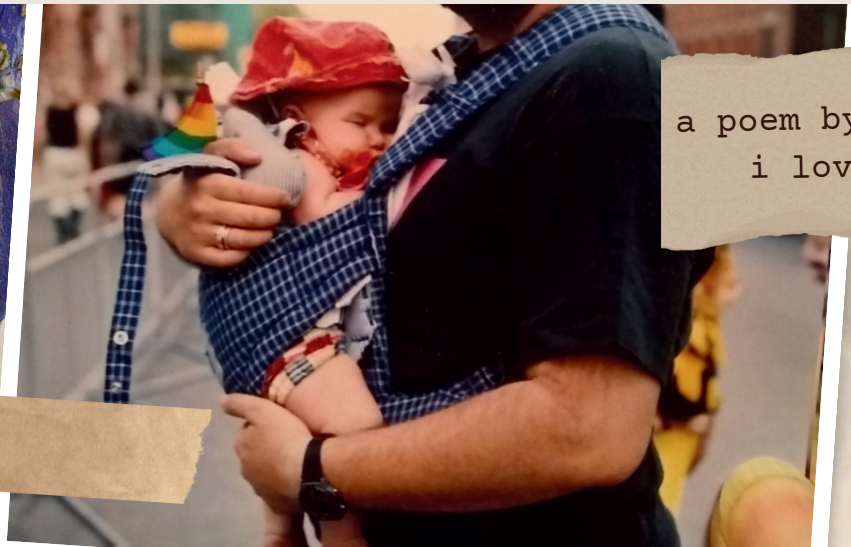
Aya Kobayashi

4th year, Co-Editor-in-Chief

# science, love, siouxsie sioux, and other things my dad taught me



There is nothing in the world my father loves more than watching me grow up.
Here I am, all 5'7 of me, evolving to a state beyond that which he could have ever dreamed before I existed.
He wakes up in disbelief that he is a father, that I am real. That miracles can happen to him and I am one.
So many obstacles to my existence, so many things that could have halted my conceptualization in its tracks.
I am here, I am alive, I have gone from his tiny baby that could fit in his arms and knew nothing of the world to this grown woman who wants to learn everything and lives miles away just to chase the everything.
My hungry child eyes that would sit at his side, scanning the car radio, waiting for his cue, "Oh, I like that one" as the snippet of song plays.
The radio's on and my father is singing
The Beatles, Nirvana, Blondie, Siouxsie Sioux, Pop Will Eat Itself
And my soft sponge brain is leaning into the speaker, world hungry and desperate for sounds, soaking in words and melodies and learning what my voice could recreate
Learning like they could teach me just as much as my father did every time he spoke
And my father, I'm sure he remembers these days
Those car rides to school, sorting laundry with him, watching him work, playing board games, always a song in the background
But somehow my father lives in disbelief, and when I sing these songs, he always says these words:
"How do you know this song?"



a poem by rae johnston
i love you papa

Lyrics that he recalls from clubs in the nineties spilling from the lips of his daughter, his flesh and blood, some thirty years later

Always shock, always surprise, as though I could forget these words that I swallowed like gospel simply because he cared about them and he was my dad, my hero, the strongest thing I knew. How could I forget them?

Time passes, years go by since those car rides to school and our car radio scanning and some years arrive where I can't bring myself to sing no matter how much I want to, no matter how much my father misses his daughter's voice and wonders how to bring me back

And when I crawled back, nails to dirt, and I started singing again and reminded the house that I was alive and breathing, it was Tears for Fears that I sang first

Shout, shout, let it all out, spilling from car speakers with an eight year old in the back and ten years later, shout, shout, let it all out from the grown woman upstairs

Here is your daughter coming alive again and she is remembering how by singing the songs you taught her.

I would waste my breath on Siouxsie Sioux and Kate Bush, I would use the lungs you gave me to remember the music you played me.

I'm a miracle of existence and I want to spend that miracle knowing you, dad, dad

You ask me how I know this song.

You ask me *how* I know this song

You ask me how *I* know *this* song

You ask me how I know Billy Joel, They Might Be Giants, The Clash, Sisters of Mercy,

Because I remember, dad

How could you ever think this was just a coincidence? How could you ever think I wasn't paying attention?

I listened every single time.

If you sang Here Comes the Sun again I would fall asleep as fast as I did twenty years ago.

You think it's odd that I know the words to Melt With You by Modern English, that maybe it's a tender kind of magic that music's neverending nature carries, or a lovely message about children finding joy in the past.

That my love for After All by Dar Williams is my good taste and not yours.

You think it has nothing to do with you. Despite the tender glorious miracle of being your child, you think it's because of some cosmic mix-up that I can sing Heart of Glass from my heart.

I think it's because you're my dad.

You think it's serendipity.

I think it's just a part of me.

Illustration by Aya Kobayashi

# Serendipity in Love

By: Nathan Agustin

**Love and romance are tumultuous and hard to keep track of. It often springs up out of nowhere and is impossible to control. Sometimes, you catch yourself falling for the barista at Tim Hortons who's humming your favorite song; or the boy who plays guitar really well; or maybe even a stranger online who's butchering the lines in karaoke.**

I was fresh off the heels of a breakup when I first joined Demo. I was exhausted from always having to contribute emotionally and never receiving the same treatment. As such, I began to resent the idea of not just love, but people in general. What was the point of feeling something if it would just be taken away? When it came time for the Demo gathering at the AGO, I was tempted not to go. A place I've never been with people I've never met sounded like the recipe for stress and anxiety. However, it is because I went to the gathering that I discovered how serendipity can go hand in hand with love.

*Serendipity, to me, is the moment of discovery that connects with you personally.*

**It's irreplaceable, and although people often think of serendipity as 'good luck' or random happenstances, I believe that there's an element of *active participation* that makes serendipity so special. In a time when everything can be researched, posted, and seen without needing to be there, discovery is like an endangered species, since everything can be found within your home's comforts. However, thanks to my experience with the Demo gathering at the AGO, I'm pleased to realize that discovery is still alive and well.**

One of the activities that we had to do at the AGO was to pick any piece that screamed 'serendipity' to us. I encountered one piece called,

## "Montmorency Falls in Winter, Quebec" by Joseph Légaré.

I chose this piece because of one small detail I noticed when seeing it in real life. On the hill, there are two coloured lines standing next to each other, one red and one blue. These lines are undoubtedly too small to see in digital copies or communicate effectively through words. Even when I was trying to show my companions during the gathering at the AGO, it took a while for them to see something I noticed easily. It is an observation I made only by experiencing it for myself. But what made the experience more serendipitous was that I developed a crush on someone while at the gathering. Although the crush didn't work out, the experience taught me that love isn't easy. It isn't something you can just demand or artificially find online. It is something you have to discover for yourself. I wouldn't have been able to find either in both my crush and the painting without actively searching for them.

Inspired by these feelings of love, serendipity, and discovery, I compiled a playlist that elicits the feelings of love. The notes, the melodies, the rhythm—they all sound like butterflies in your stomach when you think of that special someone. As such, I compiled a list of songs that make me think of ***<3 them <3***. I was broad in my selection from songs that evoke those fluttery feelings to some songs specific to certain people.

### "Cool With You" by New Jeans

I often listened to "Cool With You" by New Jeans since I was dating someone around the time it came out. Therefore, I came to associate that person with the song, so whenever I listen to it, I'm reminded of them—the excitement of riding the bus to see them and the parks we used to walk around.

### "Mona Lisa" by Mxmtoon

"Mona Lisa" by Mxmtoon is also related to the gathering (love and an association with artwork, courtesy of the ***Heartstopper*** Netflix show).

### "Talk to You" by Rick Montgomery

"Talk To You" by Ricky Montgomery reflects that fluttery feeling of wanting to talk to somebody but being too scared.

**Serendipity is about authentic discovery, and though it can appear to be purely coincidental, you have to make an active choice to find the serendipity you want.**

# The Enduring Power of E•MO•TION:

## A Love Letter to Carly Rae Jepsen

ARTICLE BY
ANNISA AZHAR

DESIGN BY
JELEENA JOHNSON

PHOTO BY MATTHEW WELCH

**The year is 2016,** and like many 13-year-olds, I hate myself. The world feels like it's in flames as my insecurities rear its ugly head. The only way to cope with this? Being a snob about music. As I sneer at my classmates and the "trashy" top 40 pop they listen to, I, an enlightened soul, cloud my ears with the most "deep" and "profound" pop-punk Japanese rock (that may or may not have been grabbed from anime). To me, the most honest and vulnerable anyone could be was when they were at their lowest. It's immature, edgy, pretentious even, but to revel in all of that felt good.

I cannot remember at what point in the year I heard "Run Away With Me" for the first time. Maybe it was through one of the numerous critics on YouTube I based my opinions off of since I couldn't have a thought on my own. Or if it was just the traces I heard in malls, parties, and anywhere between. Wherever that exact moment was, **I can still recall the feeling of hearing that opening saxophone line, and the beginning of my ideas on music being flipped entirely.** From a desire to find out and listen to that song even more, followed then by my bewilderment at finding out this magnificent song was by none other than the girl who made "Call Me Maybe." How could one transform themselves so easily, from creating one of the most irritating songs ever to exist, then suddenly making what sounded like absolute perfection?

This case of reinvention describes what was happening when Carly Rae Jepsen released her seminal 2015 album, Emotion. After the massive success of her 2012 single "Call Me Maybe," there was a tangible feeling that she could never recreate that level of stardom ever again. The sales alone proved that, while the single sold over 18 million copies worldwide, the album it promoted, Kiss, only sold a mere 1 million. The pressure to create a song as big was high, and the possibility of that happening was next to zero.

**So, what to do in the face of that? Simple: you just don't care.**

Rather than putting so much time and energy into releasing a product that sells as much as possible, direct it instead towards making something that caters to you and almost you only. That's the route Carly took, taking charge of the project entirely. Whereas Kiss was written by major pop producers such as Max Martin, Carly took it upon herself to write every song on the album. Instead of constraining herself to a congested 2-month timeframe for production, she sought to take her time, collecting collaborators over the span of a year. Every move was a decision to have the freedom to make the record Carly Rae Jepsen wanted to make, and thus E-MO-TION was born.

The story of E-MO-TION's uphill battle is one I have memorized to a tee. In part because after my first listen, I became a devoted follower of the Carly Rae Jepsen cause. Suddenly, I had all her songs downloaded on iTunes, blasting them on my iPhone as I walked the crowded halls of my high school. I kept my phone screen in view so people would know what I was listening to in an attempt to gauge curiosity. A ploy to see what eager soul would finally ask me what I was listening to, allowing me to spill this tale of E-MO-TION to said unsuspecting soul in an attempt to get them to give it a full listen. I would put its songs on playlists I sent to friends or on the aux down long drives going anywhere. I was obsessed with that album, to say the least—**but instead of hiding my passion with snobby regard, I wanted to share that adoration with those around me.** To share a piece of joy with everyone.

Part of the reason why I loved E-MO-TION so much was because of how intensely euphoric it is. The album wears its 80s influences on its sleeve without it feeling too much of a pastiche or a complete re-tread of older works. "Run Away With Me" alone is a bomb of catchy synth hooks and soaring choruses, which continues with the rest of the album. The title track, "Emotion," is optimistic with its plucky synths. The Sia-penned "Boy Problems" is so infectiously sweet, reminiscent of a chick flick with how it carries its happy-go-lucky production. When the album slows down too, like in the Dev Hynes-produced jam "All That", it still manages to carry itself. There's a clear passion that carries throughout the production of this album, mirroring how these producers were chosen with such an intent to make something worthwhile. It's stuff that I would want to pick apart and analyze for days on end in all its little components, marveling at how it all collides together to make such a compelling project.

Above all of that, however, is Jepsen herself. E-MO-TION, even with all its dazzling sonics, would not work as well if it weren't for Carly Rae Jepsen herself and how human she comes across. A trade-off from Jepsen not being a major pop star is that E-MO-TION carries a lack of spectacle with it. **She comes to you not as a god amongst men but as a friend you can confide your deepest feelings to.**

The connotation of 'vulnerability' here is not specifically a sad one, though she's able to present heartache masterfully too. Jepsen's portrayal of unrequited love on "Your Type" is incredibly cathartic, and I can name one too many times I've ended up crying into my pillow once she ends with the soaring refrain of I'll Make Time For You that blasts through my speakers.

But what makes it work even more is how positively and joyfully Carly presents the act of falling in love. To decide that being vulnerable is not simply an act of deep sadness, but also a means of expressing unabashed joy and happiness, no matter who decides to say if you are cringe-worthy or not. That passion helps even the album's roughest moments to shine, particularly with its major single "I Really Like You."

One could be cynical and remark how idiotic it is that Jepsen says she Really Really Really Really REALLY Likes You, but the energy she puts behind it makes you not want to care. If anything, it makes you want to join and sing along—to wonder about the pure bliss she's feeling too. **Despite it all, you feel in love**.

E-MO-TION was a much needed reminder for me to cherish love in all its glory. In a world where so much grief confides, the most radical thing you could do was to love something and love it without guilt. In this case, it was a newfound love for pop music and all its complexities that I once ignored due to being 13 and spiteful. A love for those around me, where some of the greatest long-lasting friendships I made were on online forums discussing its genius, and gleefully recommending other albums that felt something similar.

To approach the world with a cautious optimism yes, but to still share a deep care for those around you and not surrender to an often tired apathy that wrings you dry. You don't need to love E-MO-TION to specifically understand that deep enthusiasm that lies within everyone, but it's such a front-facing example of it for me and a reminder of how powerful music becomes when it is defined with love and care.

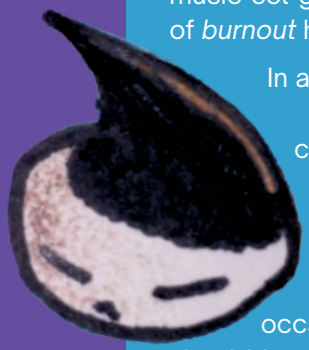
In 2023, not much has changed in that the world still feels as if it's in flames, maybe more so now than in 2016. Carly Rae Jepsen still isn't the big sensation that I wanted her to be, but I'm content. If anything, she seems content with being an indie darling, mentioning in interviews how she felt anxious during the height of her Call Me Maybe fame, and now feels comfortable where she is. Since then, her output has remained remarkably consistent, with her most recently dropping 2022's The Loneliest Time and its 2023 companion The Loveliest Time. Both records are stunning showcases of 80s dance pop fused with songs centering around loneliness and overcoming it. It excites me even more to recommend it to my friends in university, who were as clueless as the ones in high school.

Despite it all, E-MO-TION remains the album I return to most. The reality of doom and gloom had set in more than ever when I was 13, now being 21 and a stressed-out university student. The world feels terrifying more and more every day, and I cannot help but lock myself inside. Yet more than ever, I choose not to be cynical. I can put on my CD copy of E-MO-TION and remind myself to find the desire to love in all this grief. I implore everyone to cherish that snippet of passion that grounds you, music especially, in the face of what the world throws at you. **Give yourself love and everything you want too much, and maybe everything will be fine in the end.**

# you can't tell, but i'm not really here: an ode to 6 dogs

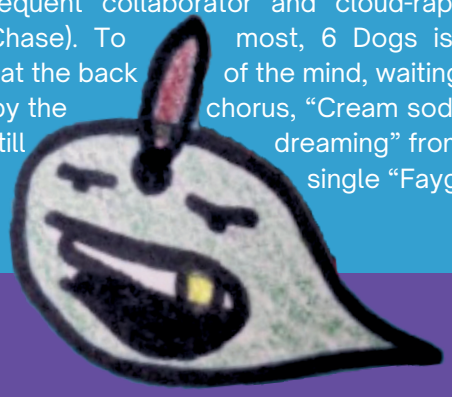
## by andrew yoo

It's been an exhausting time to feel. As I mindlessly toil away at UofT, an intoxicating malaise has evoked an internal conflict with my secular realities - notably, the impending mortality of my parents inevitably my own. Whether it's a self-preservation instinct or an unadulterated ego, I've become despondent in every sense of the term. I meander and recoil at menial conversation, I don't *feel* music quite the same, and the theme of serendipity, aside from its kitschy, marketable value, has ironically eluded me. For all the incessant music-cel gesturing I do as co-editor, the uncanny spirit of *burnout* has haunted me to no end.

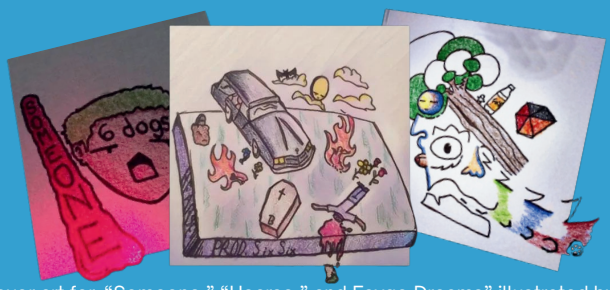


In a futile struggle to snap out of this malign funk, I sought 'homeopathic' solutions: creature comforts like glaive, Samia, Quadeca, and Jane Remover were left on repeat as a desperate last plea, but alas, nothing hit. I was left to wonder, am I broken? Am I destined to feign a fervor, a passion for music that only occasionally was authentic? Now narratively, this should be where a Deus Ex Machina swoops in to save the day! A slick new, alternative-minded album that reinvents the wheel by some inconsequential, gimmicky means - a wholly derivative work that I would project onto as inventive. Though, I don't think I'm the type for sunset conclusions.

However, as I doomscrolled ancient playlists for sparks of inspiration, I happened upon "With A Fish," a gem on Cole Bennett's curated album *All Is Yellow,* which features frequent collaborator and cloud-rap icon 6 Dogs (or Chase). To most, 6 Dogs is an itch clamouring at the back of the mind, waiting to be scratched by the chorus, "Cream soda Faygo, damn, I'm still dreaming" from his seminal single "Faygo Dreams."

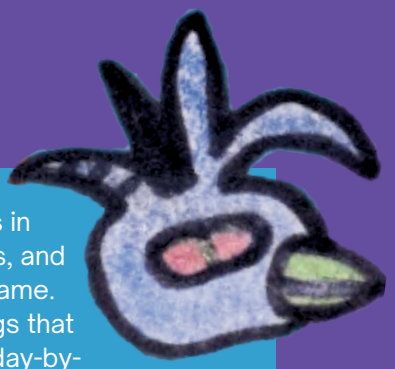


His lackadaisical, droned-out delivery while, admittedly awkward, effortlessly floats on a variable soufflé of rattling hi-hats and spacey synths. Throw in a few poignant bars about how he's "up next" and counting bands "like a motherfucking math test," and you get a peculiar artist who was a blatant topical offshoot of the dominant SoundCloud-era but a progenitor in the cloud-rap style.




Cover art for: "Someone," "Hearse," and Faygo Dreams" illustrated by 6 Dogs circa. 2016-2017

Though "Faygo Dreams" has a hegemonic grip on the now-sparse 6 Dogs discourse, his 2017 self-titled mixtape is likely the best trap-adjacent project you've never heard. Latent hits like "Spaceship" and "No Savage" are glistening, irresistibly effervescent flex anthems with ridiculously larger-than-life wordplay. 808-driven bangers like "Hearse" see 6 Dogs primally howling against the densely muddled production, panting in between breaks to get by. Through the excess of juvenile self-aggrandizing, where Chase notably claims he'll be laid to rest in a *Burberry* coffin, an underlying notion of unfulfillment manifests. As the track dwindles Chase rhetorically asks "6, why are you sad a lot?", to which he candidly retorts "bitch, look around, how are you not?" Chase's self-aware outlook and conviction for his unrefined craft granted him a distinctive authenticity, an inept relatability that would permeate his future projects.



•I was playin' Earthbound
•My 'fit is PK Fire

Chase dropped the generational *6 Dogs* at just 18 years old, setting lofty expectations for a refined, full-length debut. However, in secrecy, Chase was engaging in mental battles greater than career prospects - notably, bipolar disorder. With the release of *Hi-Hats & Heartaches*, Chase adorns the cover in a tattered Gucci Pikachu shirt, blankly staring into the distance. The unwieldy 21-song tracklist lends itself to an aesthetically scattered listen, held together by the precarious threads of Pretty Pacc's production. The once indelible, on-the-nose charm of *6 Dogs* felt gutted, lost in a vapid stew of trap cadences. Despite undeniable highs like "Portals" and "Earth Bound," Chase crashes into pronounced sonic and emotional lows that are, at the very least, harrowing listens.

For a brief moment on February 4th, 2021, the hip-hop world froze over as, at the age of 21, Ronald Chase Amick was pronounced dead. Fresh to the intimidating and confusing realm of adulthood and University, I already felt lost, but this fundamentally shattered me. 6 Dogs, *THE* artist of my late teens, that I witnessed gradually grow from a teenager himself, was just gone? Without the proper outlets to cope and an inability to recognize my mental health as anything other than inconsequential, I suffered in silence, unfairly inflicting those in the vicinity with the brunt of it. To reconfigure how one feels and reciprocates love is a nonlinear path that I continually trek. While 6 Dogs may have taken a temporary backseat to my fixations on hyperpop and indie-pop, he's always persisted in the crevices of my mind and, of course, the occasional playlist. Though, now that I've recently hit the big ol' 22, familiar aches have resurfaced.

I've become intimate with this heaviness in my chest, the short capacity of my lungs, and this self-pity bullshit I supposedly overcame. Beyond the capricious, irresolute feelings that winter induces, I'm inextricably lost as, day-by--day it becomes progressively unfeasible to feign serendipity. This magazine, this theme: the unexpected discovery of joy; what's it all for when the desire for it is all but forgone?

In a posthumously published interview with *Pigeons and Planes*, Chase divulged his life at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, positively beaming to describe his upcoming album and newfound lease on life. Boldly titled *RONALD.* this reprised self-titled lays bare Chase in a monochrome portrait with a twinkle in his eye. In his most cohesive and sonically-rounded work to date, long-time collaborators Daniel Hartzog and woods intricately elevated 6 Dogs's sound to exuberant new heights. Whirring synths and transparent mixes uplift a newly energized Chase, one that is still wildly braggadocious but finally *happy*, and even proud. No longer does he feel the need to obscure himself behind dreamy hazes; instead, opting for earworm hooks and vocal clarity. As Chase and RIZ LA VIE effortlessly exchange verses on "Beach House," I can't help but ruminate on everything Chase went through to achieve this comfortability, this inner peace with himself. Throughout my life I've always relied on external outlets to feel - short bursts of validation that enabled a destructive loss of self. But it was with this introspective revisitation of *Ronald*. I realized that, while I don't quite remember *who* I am, I know I'm worthy of healing. Serendipity isn't guaranteed, nor is it eternal. Pursue it while you can and make it count once you catch it.

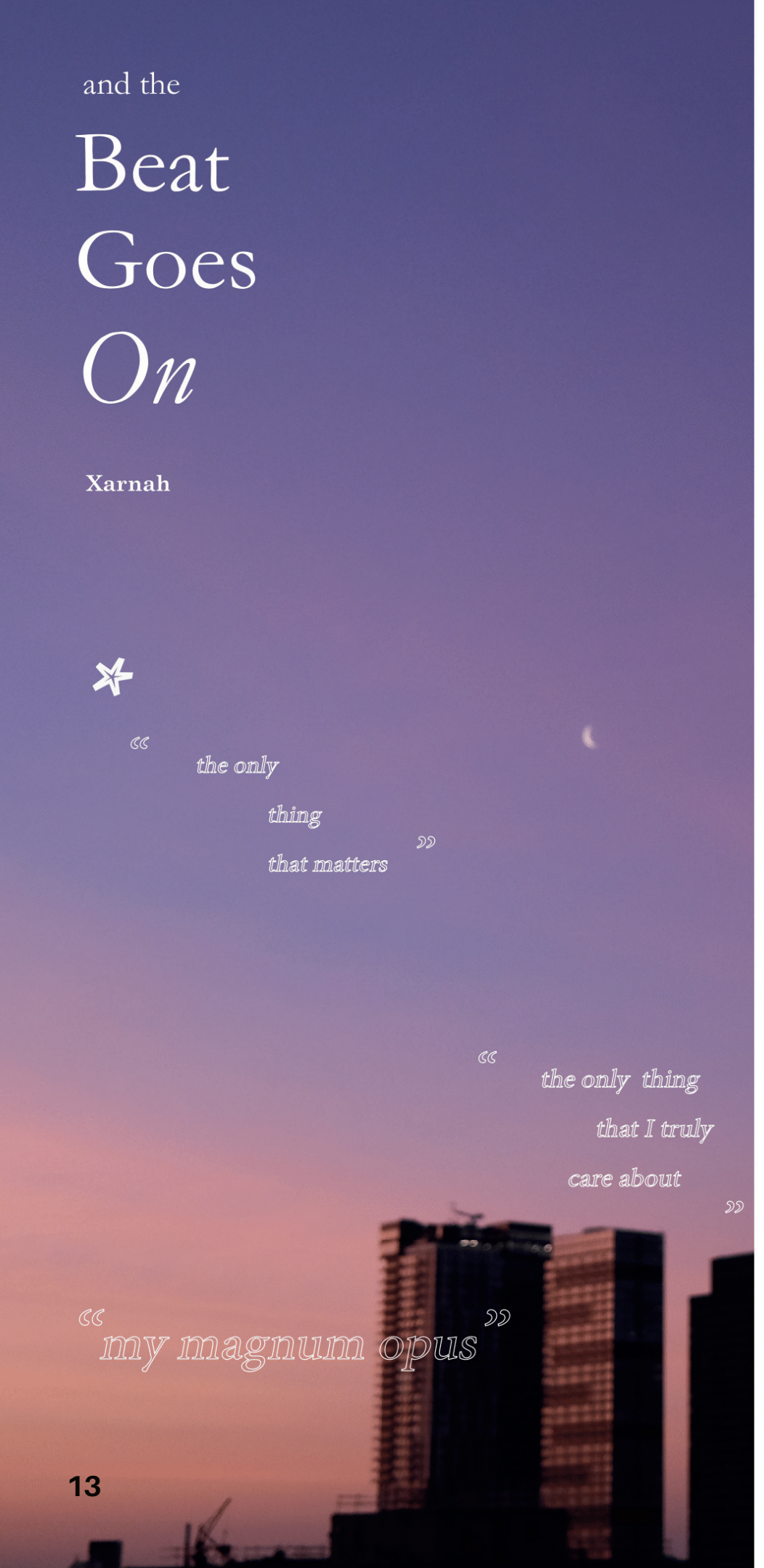
Thank you for everything Chase - I think I'm ready to be 22.

**Rest in Peace**
**Ronald Chase Amick**
**(1999-2021)**

and the

# Beat Goes *On*

Xarnah




**For the past two years, I've been working on a list with several names to date. ***

It's a list of the top 100 albums of all time—an objective attempt at defining art, which is inherently subjective. I want it to be definite; set in stone; something that everyone can agree on. So far, it's not in order. It includes titles such as *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, *Grace*, *everybody else is doing it so why can't we?*, *Motomani*, and *Metaphorical Music*. There are only 47 albums on this list, some of them tentative due to placement changes.

This is the project of a lifetime — the project of my lifetime.

Writing about music and my relation to it is hard because it always sounds cliche. I wanted to start this piece with "I sometimes don't know where music begins and I end," but I knew that was stupid. So, I thought about starting it with "music has been the only constant in my life," but I realized that that is a lie. To generalize "music" into a stable pillar in someone's life is the same as saying, "people have been the only constant in my life". "Music" is too general, but for me, music is general.

Music is jazz; it's rock; it's folk. Music is listening to One Direction's *Take Me Home* on a CD as a seven-year-old driving to school. Music is summer, *HEAT* by Brockhampton. Music is a conversation; an argument. It's my dad asking, "have you heard this song?" on Sunday mornings and shuffling through the remains of his long-lost vinyl collection.

**So, I will start in the only way I know how: my parents. As all things do.**

My mother raised me on Kate Bush even when I didn't know it. Sometimes, I forget that my mum is cool and that she is more than just my mum. All the good music I know is due to her, and thank god for that, since she laid the foundations for the music that I listen to now. She showed me The Red Hot Chilli Peppers, The Smiths, Fleetwood Mac, and even Radiohead. My mother and I get along best when we talk about bags, *Love Actually*, and music.

The older I get, the more I like Kate Bush. And the older I get, the more I understand why my mum loves Kate Bush. There is something so ethereal and womanly about her; the pain she evokes is so distinctly female. She doesn't need to sacrifice her femininity to sing from her chest, seamlessly fusing the masculine and feminine inside her.

My mum raised me on Kate Bush in a way that didn't demean her music to background noise as I was growing up, but in a way that showed me what women can be. I didn't need to see women being doctors, scientists, or astronauts to know that women were capable. I instead listened to Kate Bush and understood it all. I understood the flooding emotions welling up in your chest, the inherent pain of it all, an awakening that beckoned for me to open my eyes to the fact that women were inherently haunting creatures. There's something sickening in there—something all-consuming.

I asked my Mum about it now, how she came to like women with weird voices and pain. She tells me:

"Women with weird voices get me.
Get us."

I ask her what she means.

"They're crazy."

I tell her not to call herself crazy.
She rolls her eyes.

When my first boyfriend and I broke up, my mum took me for a drive. We didn't talk. We blasted "Silver Springs" by Fleetwood Mac, "Paper Bag" by Fiona Apple, and "Diamonds and Rust" by Joan Baez. I felt better. I felt crazy, and for once, I understood all of it.

Women are inherently haunting creatures, so they write and listen to music. It just makes sense, and so the beat goes on.

To write about my father, I had to play the music that he showed me. I listen, now, to old-school funk and Bill Withers. Writing about my dad is hard. I don't know why—so I try to submerge myself in Brother Johnson's "Right on Time." It's raining outside. In two days, it'll be Christmas.

I used to credit my taste in music to my father until I realized that, in more ways than one, I should be crediting my mother. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of my sister starting high school and in my shotgun seat debut, my dad put on BOOM 97.3, making my face twist up in disgust.

Outdated music was not something I wanted to hear now that I had front-seat privileges. I was always behind the latest tunes in school because of my dad. I missed out on the new Justin Bieber song, I hadn't heard the new Nick Jonas (even though I claimed to be the biggest Nick Jonas fan). All because my dad wanted me to listen to Queen, Michael Jackson, and Prince—people who were dead or halfway to death.

"Who is this?" my dad asks, when "Best of Burden" plays. I roll my eyes and tell him it's the Rolling Stones. Who is the lead guitarist? Brian Jones, then Keith Richards. Isn't the bass riff just great? It's whatever. The guitar is cooler.

"Do you want to learn bass, Xarnah?"

**I tell him no, why would I want to learn the bass?**

The next day, he takes me to Cosmo Music in our town. He buys me a second-hand bass for $150 that's sitting in my room to this day. I learned as much as I could. I wanted to be like Carol Kaye—my dad, too, showed me Carol Kaye.

He installed radios/CD players in all of the rooms in our house. When a certain time of the night came, he turned them all on, tuning them to the jazz radio station. We all listened to it as we fell asleep. During Christmas, he plays Parang and dances in the living room when the house is empty enough. He comes home from work with music flooding out of the windows of his stick-shift gray Mazda, and he is always playing Earth, Wind, and Fire, making sure to sing along. Music makes my dad young. It makes him look and feel as young as he thinks he is. It brings him back, he says, to simpler times. It brings him back.

My dad doesn't know what Spotify is. He is 62 (I think) and he still uses CDs, vinyl, and cassettes. His music is all something that he can hold; it's tangible. Music, to him, is physical. It's submerged into him. He's always trying to learn how to play new instruments (the guitar, the bass, the drums, the trumpet, the piano) and always regrets his lack of an ear for it. He made us all do high school band for four years of high school and clapped me on the back when I spoke passionately about my trumpet solos. Music is embedded into his soul. I like to believe that he thinks in melodies. And the beat goes on.

In the end, music is summers between high school and university, windows down, listening to "Ribs" by Lorde with people I no longer speak to. Music is Heinkein's with Nora and Japanese fusion on the speaker. Music is Carly Rae Jepsen with my sister when the suns sets down at dusk, marmalade hues embossed in the sky. Music is Twenty One Pilots and My Chemical Romance in the seventh grade with Maggie, thinking I was better than everyone else. But, truly, at the end of it all, music is my mom and my dad, and it is something that will continue to carry on forever. Because before there was anything—before there were humans—there was music. I don't have to know where music begins and I end, because I guess we are the same for as silly as that sounds.

Article by Finch Strub, Designed by Lusayo Simwaka

# Friends I've Made Through Talking About Music (and how you can do it too)

OK

I've never really been good at talking to people. I know that sounds like something a kid with too much eyeliner would post on Tumblr, but alas, it's true. Somehow, though, all my anxiety about saying the 'right' thing or not making a fool of myself vanishes the second the topic veers toward music. Having spent my formative years sitting in front of a radio after plundering the CD cabinet, or later shuffling through the audio section of my small town thrift store searching for anything I recognized, it means a lot to me. Even today, I spend half my day with headphones in, blasting god knows what to drown out the sound of my roommate's very loud midnight conversation about economics. Talking about music is a familiar friend, and something that I know enough about to actually pull my weight in conversation.

Questions about favourite bands or albums that changed the trajectory of someone's life are a saving grace during a painfully awkward silence, and usually end in either some kind of deep conversation or a friendly argument about certain artists. I think you can tell a lot about people from what they listen to, and it helps me gauge whether or not we could be friends. I've met the majority of the people I'm close with because we shared similar tastes in music, and got to talking about how much we miss Warped Tour and how Green Day's most recent album was a complete and utter bust (if you disagree, I'm sorry). Collective nostalgia and/or disdain are powerful forces, and I owe them some of my closest relationships. This is an homage to those people, the spaces in which music has enabled me to meet more of them, and how you can use them to do the same.

File Edit Search Help

"Talking about music is a familiar friend, and something that I know enough about to actually pull my weight in conversation"

Every time I've been in line at a show alone, I've made friends. There's something about the shared anticipation of seeing an artist everyone there enjoys that makes it that much easier to forge a connection. The very first concert I attended without my parents was terrifying: I'd been abandoned by the person who'd given me the ticket and had just spent half an hour trying to find them in the rapidly growing line. Anxious about not having anyone more experienced with me, I joined the queue and awaited my fate of spending the night alone. A duo ahead of me was chatting excitedly, one of whom had bright purple hair. I took a shot and complimented them, telling them how cool I thought it looked and how I'd always wanted to dye my hair.

We struck up a conversation, and after telling them my sob story, I was invited to join them for the night. We talked, danced, sang along, and looked for (but never found) my friends. Looking back, I'm still grateful they let me tag along. That experience showed me that people are kinder than you think they are and gave me the confidence to keep talking to fellow concertgoers a couple of years down the line. Unsurprisingly, my fear of going to concerts alone has never faded. A few months back, I attached myself to yet another duo, one of which ended up taking photos for the review I did of that show. These two longtime friends knew more about the band than I did, and we talked about everything from school to crispy chicken sandwiches. We were at the barrier, which meant I got a great view, and she got great photos. They took videos of the opening band I'd come to see so that I could enjoy the moment and even gave me a ride home after everything was over. When I listen to the band now, I think about them and how much better the experience was because I didn't have to do it alone. Even though these people might be four digits in my Instagram following in a few years, they've made the memories of those shows much better.

Of course, show lines are sadly not the only places I exist. Online spaces are ideal for finding people with similar music tastes or general interests. Though mostly a dramatic and emotionally scarring experience, I did emerge from the Discord trenches with one of my closest friends. We originally bonded over liking the same bands, many of which were the byproducts of an all-consuming emo phase that never fully left. We became close quickly and stuck together through the disintegration of our collective friend group. Apparently, a mutual love for Blink-182 can withstand pretty much anything. Three years later, we still talk often about what we're listening to or what guitar part they're learning. Even with a border and a time zone between us, they're still one of the most important people in my life.

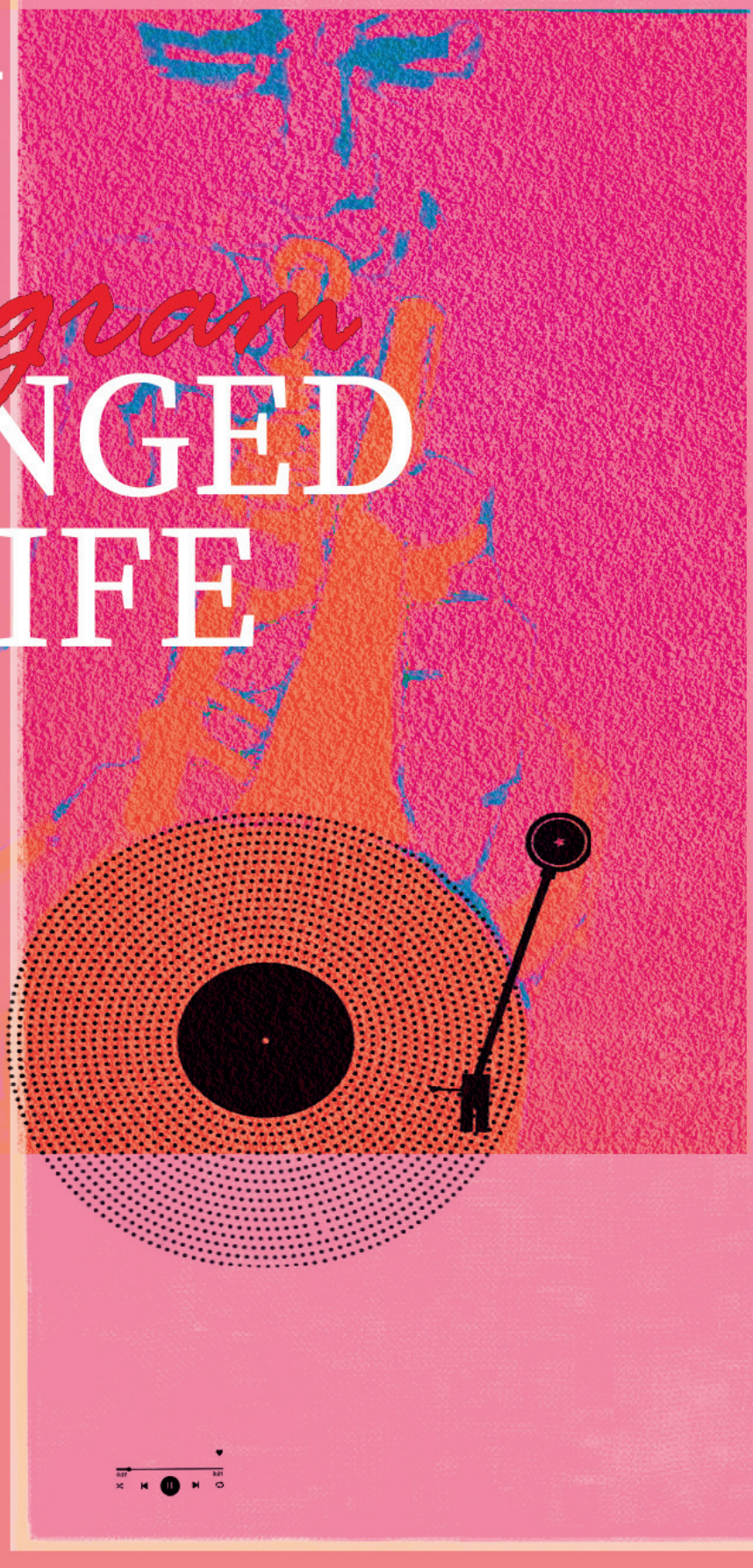
Back in the real world, U of T has been a great way to find people willing to discuss music. Whether in an actual course, through Demo, or other groups on campus, there are many spaces tailor-made for socializing with people. Open mic nights and other performances have allowed me to talk to several local musicians, which is great socially and for involving myself in the local scene. Aside from that, just asking what kind of music someone likes will sometimes bring them to tell you about the band they're in. This community is full of talented musicians and people with different tastes, making it easy to find someone who enjoys the things you do. I met someone recently just because they brought up Pete Wentz in passing, which sparked a conversation about Fall Out Boy and the scene they were a part of. Though it's much easier when you know people like the same things as you, it is also possible for it to occur naturally.

"All I had to do was type a greeting or say hello, and I think that's a pretty small price to pay for so many good memories."

I know it's terrifying to strike up a conversation, but when you're in spaces where common interests with those around you are almost guaranteed, I highly suggest you take a leap of faith. Meeting new people in a big city isn't always easy, but I'd be willing to bet that most people would be open to making new friends. Perhaps you'll emerge with an interesting contact, some photos, or even someone who'll stick with you through it all. I'm eternally grateful for the people I've met over the years, and I hope to continue adding to that list. All I had to do was type a greeting or say hello, and I think that's a pretty small price to pay for so many good memories.

# HOW *Instagram* CHANGED MY LIFE

By Jeanne Polochansky



Before Reels or the audio library, the only way to find music on Instagram was if you were lucky enough that your checkered explore page had a video with a song embedded into it. One such innocuous edit kickstarted my teenage obsession with British folksters Mumford and Sons, which left me with a Babel vinyl, tour tickets to Delta, and an exclusive CD to boot. That was my first brush with the very real serendipity of social media, and I took it to heart when I continued to customize my experience online, especially with the introduction of Stories and Instagram Music. Together, they became a gateway to a regretless internet experience - a post capable of unique effects and a focused audience, without any of the permanence.

Despite their incessance, I rarely mute Stories, even if the circles just waiting to be greyed out addict me to refreshing my feed at an unhealthy frequency. I became near-superstitious about them after one ordinary Halloween, when I decided to check my socials for the last time, no matter that I'd just come back from bar-hopping with friends until closing and already faceplanted onto my bed. It was a blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment: the Story had only a link and a gif going 'Apply!' above it, and was from someone who posted frequently. Despite already hitting the 23 hour mark, and the fact that I've never written for a zine before, I took a chance on the submission form (I was still zealous, then).

I ended up getting the role as a poet and editor, and what followed was the stuff of dreams: collaborating with my idols on media projects inspired by incredible alternate universes, making international friends and pen pals I can't live without, and eventually, coming across my current musical brainworm: Half*Alive.

I was two years late to their 2019 hit "Still Feel" and another two to seeing the trio on tour, but I'm endlessly grateful that they popped up when they did - on my Stories - especially as I was heading for a rough mental run. Their COAP show in Toronto reunited me with someone whom I'd invited to a writers' circle in first year, and our neighbouring seats proved, beyond reasonable doubt, that serendipity governs my creative life.

The concert itself opened my eyes to just how far the Californians have come, from the props, to the engagement, to the vocal mastery (that has hollowed any recordings of theirs for me, if you were wondering), and while I have some... opinions on their choice of live choreographic accompaniment, I can appreciate the value of combining contemporary styles on stage, ones where the dance takes its own course, rather than just acting as entertainment.

I'm not music-savvy - I don't make playlists, and Spotify is my archnemesis - but this art is essential to my existence. I surround myself with songs that enchant me with their narratives and style, constantly obsessed with the way words coalesce. Half my daydreams are spent wishing I was part of the JA Collective, that the childhood-hobby-to-high-school-major-to-full-time-job pipeline actually is real, just for a chance to embody the band in my kind of studio; I marvel at their collaboration with dancers and seek to reach that level of ingenuity.

Unique melodies and lyrics find a place in my biorhythm, and somehow, Half*Alive have managed to rival my circadian cycle. Even after having their albums on loop, I enjoy the novel familiarity of their sound, and though they might grow old for me on my next listen, I know I'll always have a time of my life to reminisce on. And, well, I hate to admit that social media isn't all a mistake, but if it's taught me anything, it's that you never know - your life could change for the better, all thanks to the right story at the right time.

# letting music happen

## hayden zahary

**THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THIS ISSUE OF *DEMO***, you'll have read my colleagues' stories about the kinds of random, chance encounters that have shaped their relationships with the music that they listen to. I think that it's crucial to note that these kinds of 'happy accidents' aren't equally likely to come about in any situation. They're much more likely to happen when one actively leaves themselves open to chance. And I think that by looking at how musicians can let randomness play a role in their work, we can see how this is true.

If you read any music writing, you'll often see perfectionism lionised, through the image of the artist who works through the night in the studio fine-tuning everything, trying to get the snare sound just right. I'm not going to act like I'm too good to appreciate some precision-engineered pop music, and I can certainly respect the kind of craft that goes into making music that's planned and orchestrated down to the minutest detail. However, I think that leaving things open to randomness, to accident and to (mis)fortune can lead to beautiful results, and indeed plenty of incredible music is produced through things like this. The most obvious example would be improvisation-centric genres like jazz, but the nature of the very sound files coming to our ears can be thrown to the wind

There are few things in the history of music that better illustrate the importance of chance than the history of guitar distortion. If you look into any example of distorted sounds prior to when the first pedals were created to make them in the '60s, you'll find semi-legendary stories about how the sounds were arrived at.

illustrations by aya kobayashi

The earliest example of the sound is on **“How Many More Years”** by the Chicago bluesman Howlin’ Wolf, where the guitarist got overdrive on his guitar by cranking his amp louder than it was meant to be played. In the years following that, a lot of guitarists apparently found their way to new tones for their instruments by simply damaging their own equipment, whether that was accidental, as in the story that the guitarist on the 1951 single **“Rocket 88”** damaged his amp by dropping it while unloading a van, or purposefully, as in Link Wray’s infamous 1958 single **“Rumble,”** the aggressive sound of which came from a speaker Wray had poked holes in with a pencil.

Either way, creative musicians took these weird new noises and turned them to the advantage of their songs, with “Rocket 88” becoming a big hit and “Rumble” having such an effect on people that it ended up getting banned from radio due to promoting juvenile delinquency, even though it was entirely instrumental. The kinds of sounds that would define so many rock bands in the decades afterward didn’t come from perfectly organised genius plans, but they came serendipitously.

***By pushing their instruments and technology to the breaking point and allowing whatever happened to happen, these musicians accidentally invented whole new genres.***

Beyond the potential for the whims of fate to lead us to sounds and musical ideas that a human being couldn’t draw out of their own brain, I think that there’s also something very special to the experience of participating in this kind of musical serendipity, even if the results aren’t particularly profound.

***Playing music myself, a lot of my fondest memories are of jam sessions convened without any particular direction or structure.***

We’d constantly play songs we barely knew how to play, spin dials and knobs on instruments and effects pedals to see what happened, veer into rhythms just because we thought they were funny. There would be plenty of wrong notes played (at least by me) and clashes and things that sounded awful, but it was a really rewarding activity.

***When the conflicting streams of consciousness of everyone playing could be led into the same directions, we could find ourselves playing something that was cool in an altogether unexpected way.***

If there were bad results, they were often just as memorable and as much fun to experience as the moments of success in their own way. There’s something about the experience of collectively horribly botching a song with your friends. The piece of recorded music which best captures that is, I think, the cover of the 80s pop song “Take On Me” by the emo band Cap’n Jazz. Singer Tim Kinsella barely even tries to hit the high notes correctly, but you can tell from his voice that he’s having a hell of a time not hitting those notes, and I find it really charming to hear. It’s this kind of approach of throwing things at a wall musically that makes playing music in a group such a fun experience.

***There’s something special about picking up an instrument and allowing yourself to simply let things go where they may, especially when one works with the semi-randomness of several other people’s decisions.***

If you’re a musician, I absolutely encourage you to participate in this kind of improvisation or just unprepared playing and see what happens; it can be really joyful, and also can build up a strong connection with the people you play with. If you’re not a musician though, I think you can still see the point I’m trying to make. For serendipity to be possible, it’s vital to leave open room for chance and error, and I think that for many people, very much including me, it’s easy to forget that. Particularly in the world we live in today, where algorithms that have been designed to always give us the ‘right’ thing rule our media consumption and we’re exposed to endless examples of people doing everything perfectly, it’s easy to flee from all randomness. But for serendipity to come into our lives, we need to allow things to do things sloppily, haphazardly, and just plain incorrectly, and to let ourselves be taken in the directions that our whims or our friends’ might take us.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY AYA KOBAYASHI

# LADY LUCK IN LOST MUSIC

## THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF ARCHIVING

**AYA KOBAYASHI**

**4chan is a notorious messaging board known for QAnon conspiracy theories, the emergence of the far-right, and anime degenerates with neckbeards growing faster than their chances of touching grass and interacting with a female in a civil, cordial manner. This digital septic tank and the music industry may be mutually exclusive on the surface, but a fateful thread posted in 2016 builds a formidable Venn diagram between the two, spearheading one of the most compelling cases of internet investigations that pieced a long-lost shoegaze band from the late '90s back together.**

The case of Panchiko wouldn't have been possible without the advent of the internet. After a user from the UK dug up their seminal EP, *D>E>A>T>H>M>E>T>A>L*, out of an Oxfam charity bin and posted it on 4chan's /mu/ board, it took four years for a growing search party to find each member online. Now in their 30s, lead singer Owain Davies, guitarist Andy Wright (who was in South Korea when contacted by Davies to reunite), and bassist Shaun Ferreday were plucked out of their day-to-day routines, hoisted into the industry once more by anonymous netizens to bring Panchiko back. Since the end of the pandemic, the band has toured across Europe and the UK, releasing their new album, *Failed at Math(s)*, in 2023 alongside a companion tour to North America.

We live in an age where the spread of information bullets through algorithms strictly calculated to our taste. While there are many anxieties surrounding the future of technological evolution and its pace, the easy access to investigative tools that search engines can bring closes the large gaps in history—no matter how big or small—that connect us to a bygone era lost to the lamentations of inferior archiving methods.

Unfortunately, even the internet suffers through the deletion of old content, whether it be a regretful Facebook status update or a blog collecting dust and $20 from your bank account for monthly domain fees. Now more than ever, archiving and keeping lost content is necessary for the survival of digital cultural artifacts—including your defunct Ask.fm logs. The raw vulnerability of music resonates with the very heartstrings of your finsta vents, and in some ways, keeping those memories is vital in preserving the tapestry of our beautiful life on this big, blue planet.

## THOMAS EDISON, A FRAUD?

To understand how music can be lost, you have to dive deep into the origins of how the human voice can be captured and preserved in the first place. Most often think of the cylinder phonograph as the first tool to record sound, but this was not the case.

Nearly two decades earlier, Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville patented the phonautograph in France. Scott de Martinville recorded someone singing "Au Clair de la Lune" in 1860, while Edison's phonograph produced a recording of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 1877.

In both cases, music was never the target. Both had visions of their inventions becoming the progenitor of a new normal—a world where notetakers didn't hold the burden of rapidly jotting down speech to text. However, despite choosing nursery rhymes as a test piece, Scott de Martinville and Edison didn't realize the sheer impact their creations would have on music. From a shoddy tinfoil cylinder that only gargled static and noise all the way to the crisp, clear production demanded by artists today, the path that musicians would tread was set in stone. Voices of the past could now be kept and played back in a loop, and it would only take another decade until Emile Berliner created the first commercially sold disc record.

Unfortunately, Berliner's first disc record was lost in time, but Scott de Martinville and Edison's recordings were revived through meticulous efforts to transcribe their recordings via software that translated these artifacts into digital audio. The earliest human recordings can now be heard through reuploads on YouTube, allowing us to listen to "Au Clair de la Lune" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in the same way Scott de Martinville and Edison captured centuries ago.

Though these recordings may not be your next favorite single, it's worth noting that the common denominator between the French and American proto-audio engineers was music. The irony here is that both aimed at preserving voices, yet their own recordings got lost in the trenches of history.

## SOME DAY YOU'RE GONNA MAKE IT, JOE

The poster boy of lost music is a cartoon of a timid, frog-like alien with two protruding eyes, reflecting a meek, nervous tick as it reluctantly asks, *'Hi, how are you?'*. Daniel Johnston's unfinished, self-released album is the pinnacle of raw, authentic self—a lo-fi window into his mind, thoughts, and feelings. For Johnston, music was always in the background. What mattered to his teenage self was access to an outlet, done ceaselessly through recording his ramblings in cassette tapes, later adding accompaniments such as keys, guitar riffs, and percussion. He would then turn these diary entries into heartfelt songs, handing meticulously re-recorded variations to everyone he encountered, among them a zeal of friends, family, record executives, and strangers alike.

The difficulty in tracking Johnston's original recordings lies in his painstaking process of re-recording every material he had, carefully curating his sound and voice based on his tapes' receivers. Thanks to Johnston's late manager, Jeff Tartakov's efforts, most of his original recordings have been successfully revived and archived. Commendably, Johnston's tapes are one of the most unbridled accounts of humanity, sharing all of his fragile vulnerabilities with the rest of the world. Apart from inspiring industry hard-hitters such as Nirvana and Sonic Youth, Johnston's tapes evoke a quintessentially honest memorabilia of the anguish and schadenfreude of life. Through sheer empathy, Johnston's career spanned an entire lifetime until he died of a suspected heart attack at 58. A young Johnston in the '80s may not have seen the foresight that his tapes would accomplish, but it's undoubtedly a powerful phenomenon to observe something so personal spiral into world arenas and festivals, a naked truth confronted by people who share his woes in an everlasting community of solace that grows past his untimely death.

## myspace
## LOSTSPACE, OURSPACE

The early days of the internet are a manifestation of Johnston's personal audio diaries. At its center was MySpace, a social media platform branded as an ancient relic by those born in the post-9/11 world. As a precursor to Facebook, Twitter (I refuse to call it 'X'), and Tumblr, MySpace was a hellscape of unfiltered idealogues. With the added benefit of sharing photos, videos, and audio files online, musicians began taking up the task that Johnston has demonstrated in his tapes on altered heights, directly uploading their music on MySpace. Evident in the success stories of the Arctic Monkeys and Ed Sheeran, MySpace as a platform has been pivotal in the direction of music management. While record labels still hold a tremendous amount of leverage in the avenues of success they can throw signed artists into, the undeniable truth is that social media has become the new normal for budding musicians to share their craft.

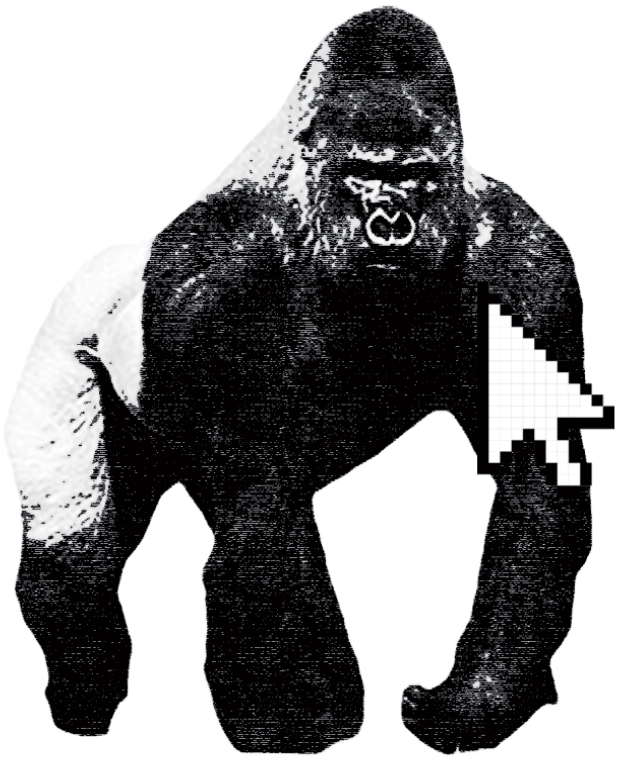
With the advent and downfall of MySpace comes a plethora of lost artists who could break the digital market, leaving no analog trails to track.

Thankfully, a site dedicated to searching for lost MySpace music, appropriately named *Lost MySpace*, has made this task easier. Nonetheless, the end of a budding music scene specifically entrenched in the backwater of a digital diaspora deserves a proper mourning period. As the pioneer in expanding the accessibility of music, MySpace has achieved nothing short of connecting global audiences to musicians with a click of the mouse. The disappearance of the platform and its subsequent erasure of those who didn't "make it" reflect both the harsh reality of the music industry and the growing difficulties that come with the convenience of uploading anything online. Wiping everything off the internet has become as easy as creating an account and sharing basement recordings of rudimentary songs compiled in adolescence. The saturation of acts on the internet has also made archiving every single lost artist, album, or song a difficult feat. *Lost MySpace* has managed to create a database of over 450,000 recovered music, but that's a small fraction of the musicians we lost in the closure of MySpace.

## THE INTERNET'S VOYAGER GOLDEN RECORDS

NASA launched a golden vinyl into space in 1977, containing sounds and images reflecting Earth's diverse cultures. 9Gag attempted to do the same by carving a limestone full of outdated memes from the 2000s. Call it cringy or true, but our obsession with leaving remnants of ourselves for a future generation is tantamount to what makes us human. In a way, the growing futility of archiving and searching for every single tidbit of lost music, with the hopes of recreating an inspirational success story such as Panchiko's, is, in itself, a serendipitous showcase of the foresight and empathy that defines our species. A perpetual yearning for the past alternatively fuels and informs our prospects for the future. No more is this human marvel evident than in our keen efforts to keep the music of the past alive, transcending through time into a perennial continuum. Our parents have passed their favorite artists to us, which was passed onto them by their parents and beyond. Of all the mediums out there, music is the one that withstands the test of time and will continue to do so as the internet evolves. Now that you've reached the end of this piece, perhaps it's time for you to compile your musical archives or embark on a relentless search online into the deep rabbit hole of lost music—but before you do that, I'd like to ask you a question.

# GORILLA STORE.



It is May 27th, 2023. You wake up at 11:00 AM, as you usually do on these languid days in between completing your winter finals and starting your summer job. You have agreed to meet up with a friend sometime in the mid-afternoon, yet before you begin typing a message to clarify the time and locale to orient yourself, you see a message from another friend: "It's Doors Open today. Wanna go?"

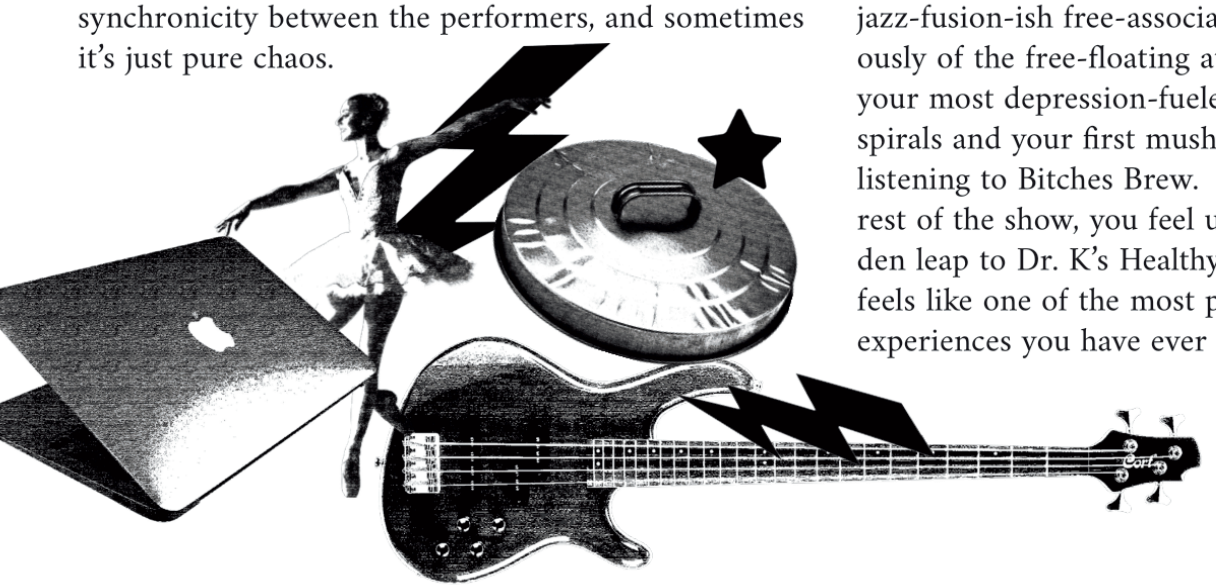
Doors Open is an event held by the city of Toronto where some 150 odd publicly and privately owned spaces are made accessible to the public for one weekend in May. You call both your friends to tell them to meet at Nathan Phillips Square in a couple hours, and you browse the city of Toronto website while you eagerly get ready for the day.

What initially catches your eye is the event's annual theme: City of Sound. When you arrive at City Hall, there's an artist singing classic soul songs with a karaoke backing track in the main courtyard. While this will be your only exposure to municipally-organized live music that day, the City of Sound idea is ever-present. When you ascend the elevated walkways of city hall to see its overgrown rooftop gardens, you hear the city bustling with sound. What, on busier, less exploratory days, might seem like sensory pollution, today, feels like pollination. On May 27th, Toronto felt like the city Jane Jacobs wrote about; you and your friends will plan once again to finally see a Reg Hartt presentation at Cineforum, but today feels like it might actually happen. That is, until your friend tells you that there's a concert happening that evening that they think you'll like. So you continue to wander through noisy, sunny, and joyful streets to College and Ossington to catch a show at the Gorilla Store.

When you ask the band, Ecotone Orchestra, what they will be performing, they struggle to find the words. What they can muster is that they're playing alongside, or rather, against another band, Un-Nowen-No, and oh! Also someone named Colin will be opening. When Colin walks outside, you quickly learn he's the reason you are here. He's the one your friend met at a show, he's the one whose Instagram story has led you to the spot you are standing at now. You are struck by his immediate warmth and enthusiasm. You feel as though you have stumbled into an entire community completely novel to you; however, you are immediately welcomed.

When you wander inside, you realize that the venue, the Gorilla Store, is not a designated concert space but an educational toy store, with all sorts of DIY experiment kits, puzzles, and plushies of microbes and planets. The rearrangement for the concert is limited, but effective: a large wooden table in the middle of the store with a laptop and some sort of modular setup, a small wooden table with a computer monitor, some audience and performer seating, a couple of amps, and a projector which is currently playing a YouTube video of a ballet class set to 0.25x speed; barely moving at all, directly onto the wall above the shelves. The arrangement is a cramped semicircle, and the limited space means the physical separation between the audience and performers is, at a glance, negligible. You sit in front of the amp for the opening set by Colin, performing under the name *_53d8ZxP*, for which you will be so close as to basically be on stage.

Colin's work is self-described as "experimental percussion," and the descriptor is quite fitting. His performance uses a scattering of found objects: a trashcan lid, a shoeshine rack, a pewter cup, an ornate aluminum serving dish, each struck, rubbed, and beat together with a variety of mallets and tools. While the performance is hypothetically solo, the bluetooth speakers duct-taped on each arm each play a different twitch stream which he randomly chose at the start of the performance—in a sense, turning the streamer on the other end into a non-consenting collaborator. It's hypnotic and exciting, structured by a few pauses in which Colin swaps out his current arrangement of objects for others, devising little improvisational exercises out of the uses and mis-uses of objects. With each passing song, the objects seem close to breaking, or rather, like they're in the process of being broken. Sometimes there's a clear rhythm, sometimes there's synchronicity between the performers, and sometimes it's just pure chaos.



In between acts, you stare down your friends, agape and aghast at what you have just witnessed. You're all so taken aback by your enjoyment, and you need to go walk around to talk about it, but attempting to speak, you find yourselves making little sense. When you meander your way to the back of the store, you discover that the Gorilla Store does not merely sell educational tools for kids, but for adults; old electronics, some being sold for scraps, others being sold for direct use—old Disco Mixers and typewriters and Oscilloscopes and fifty other things you can't recognize. You feel like buying something but don't know how you'll carry it home. You stumble back into the main area of the store and observe as the main event begins: Ecotone Orchestra V.S. Un-Nowen-No.

Next to the window sits Ecotone: Yoshi on bass, Sierra on no-input mixer, and Ben on Sax, each hooked up to a variety of pedals and positioned with their shoulder to the projector. On the other side, at the table, are Un-nowen-no: Owen Kurtz, with a modular setup and a laptop running Reaper, and Lily Platt (or possibly her VTuber alter-ego *uh…no!*) with a laptop hooked up to the projector and Owen's laptop. The bands performatively fight over the title of main act, and the show has seemingly already begun. Shrill, bassy noises start emerging from Sierra's amp, and Yoshi and Ben begin filling out the room with mystical sounds. But, as soon as you begin to feel hypnotized by the noise, Lily begins warming up her instrument.

The ballet lingering on screen as background noise for the last hour is interrupted by the opening of a new incognito tab, which rushes to the default YouTube homepage, clicks a Mr. Beast video, mutes it, skipping by 10 seconds to the beat. The hypnotism of Un-Nowen-No's death-driven internet surf and Ecotone's jazz-fusion-ish free-association reminds you simultaneously of the free-floating attention that comprises both your most depression-fueled content-consumption spirals and your first mushroom trip in the Brickworks listening to Bitches Brew. In this moment, and for the rest of the show, you feel uncomfortably seen: the sudden leap to Dr. K's HealthyGamerGG YouTube Shorts feels like one of the most poetic and personal artistic experiences you have ever had.

There is, within this musical event unfolding before you, a congruence between the type of attention the internet pushes us towards and the way your post-internet ADHD brain is able to freely connect its attention. There is a sense that neither one is imposing on the other, but that they are both unfolding aspects of nature, that all creativity, even that which fuels harmful creations, is natural. It doesn't feel like total acceptance either, but rather, an attempt to find the root of a problem, so that the pain can be separated from the joy. When you talk to the Ecotone members after the show, their motto "natural music for a natural world" rings with more philosophical rigor than a simple band slogan.

There is a clear back and forth between the bands, as the "V.S." in the event's title would indicate. About halfway through the show, they start using an online decision wheel with all the participating musicians' names on it. When the wheel fatefully lands on a name, the room yells it out, as the musician leaves their instrument and hits a button in the middle of the room. When certain pieces are temporarily removed, you are struck by just how cleanly they fit together and the potency of each individual musician in the performance.

However, this concert does not merely let you linger in a space of comfortable recognition; rather, it constantly pushes you to its boundaries, setting limits to the limitless space that the internet and your consciousness often set. When Lily opens a new browser, you get a glimpse of her search bar's autofill as she searches "how to…," filling out to "how to be an influencer," the sight of which causes the audience to erupt. Her intended query, "how to stop internet addiction," produces a greater eruption, but one which dies much faster. There's a sense of vulnerability, that we are seeing something incredibly personal, incredibly risky, in possibly catching glimpses of the movement of her unconscious in the act of surfing, of seeing the way she names and organizes her files, the rhythmic interplay of notifications popping up and the speed at which they are dismissed. And yet, there is also a sense of her agency, the way in which her scrolling is performative and intentional, rhythmic and collaborative—in other words, musical.

Talking to her after the show, you learn that Lily sees herself more as a video/performance artist, but you can't help but see the mode of attention she applies to the internet as unconditionally musical. When you speak to your friends, they all agree; she plays the internet with more musicality than some jazzers play their pianos. Music or not, the collaboration with bandmate Owen Kurtz is a sonic wonder, transforming their separate performances into one, depositing the countless channels of internet-brained attention into an ocean of sound. The constant scrolling no longer switches from one thing to the other so immediately, as sounds from the last Mr. Beast video overlap the Jerma985 stream clip, or the Law & Order sound cuts through the next YouTube short.

While the show is full of incredible moments, none top the show's climax: Lily, after continuing to search things like "IM ADDICTED TO YOUTUBE" and "GAME THEORY," starts a call with herself on Discord between her devices, reflexively fixing her posture as soon as the webcam fires up. But then, the ultimate twist: she puts a kaleidoscope lens on her phone, and goes outside. The band jams out to the visuals (which look like your typical 432 Hz meditation YouTube video visualizer) as you can't help but pose yourself standing in the webcam footage. When she removes the kaleidoscope, she is entering the Splish Splash Convenience and Laundry down the street, grabbing a drink from the fridge and standing in line. You chuckle at the idea of internet addiction, of twitter screenshots of twitter replies of pictures of grass. You are grateful for going outside today, but you almost shed a tear thinking about the days you couldn't.

When she returns to the venue, the room erupts with applause. After watching these musicians weave their attention and artistry seamlessly between each other, you are finally able to put some sort of expression to the feeling that you have been participating the whole time: you applaud, as if applause is an instrument, as if you are the room itself, as if this room is not contained by walls but extends as far as the whole city itself, as far as the internet has its grasp on you and everyone around you, as if this is your solo.

When you get home, you text your friends that you're gonna write a review of the show, because somebody has to. Your friends agree and you gush about how it's the greatest show you've ever seen. You do some internet sleuthing and find Josh Sparks' *Render File* series where improvisatory musicians from around Toronto soundtrack video games. You also stumble upon Yoshi's *Mifune Moods*, which is similar but for films. You listen to Owen Kurtz' sound-art label, Ministry of Phonic Services and all the beautiful albums/artists on it, and watch parts of *uh...no!*'s twitch stream where she reconstructs her apartment from scratch. You hang out with Colin and he tells you about the decades-spanning *Audiopollination* concert series and Joe Strutt's *Mechanical Forest Sound* blog.

You write what you can, but with no clear line to publishing it to an audience, it crawls to the back of your mind, slipping in through philosophical and romantic daydreams about the city, music, attention, and the internet. You find out about a music magazine that students at your university run, and write a review of the new Drake album for it. You read backlogs of their annual print issues and find the writing in them to be ambitious and fun. You hear about this years theme, *serendipity*, and immediately know that you already have something to write about.

★

I would like to give a huge thank you to Colin, Yoshi, Ben, Sierra, Owen, and Lily for allowing me to interview them for this piece. If this show interested you, please check the full recording on the Ministry of Phonic services YouTube channel. If you'd like to see some other live performances of a similar vein, check out these resources for other experimental/improvisational music in Toronto:

The artists mentioned:
@dipshit_ass_420 (Colin/_53d8ZxP)
@ecotoneorchestra (Ecotone Orchestra)
@digital.desires (uh...no! Of Un-Nowen-No)
@owenkurtz (Owen of Un-Nowen-No)
@ministryphonic https://ministryofphonicservices.bandcamp.com/ (Owen Kurtz's Sound-Art/Experimental Music Label, which he and colin are releasing an album as Wilderness Adventure Ride in March 2024)

Render File, hosted by Josh Sparks (@idoitforthekids) (who also recorded the concert video for the GS show!), a concert series where musicians (such as the ones from the GS performance!) soundtrack video games live!

Mifune Moods, a concert series hosted by @yogini.walli (Yoshi of Ecotone), where musicians create awesome experimental, often mprovised, soundtracks to films

Audiopollination, a monthly improvisational music jam that posts full videos of all their performances!

Mechanical Forest Sound, a blog recommended to me by several GS performers documenting all sorts of experimental music in Toronto with a really well updated calendar of shows huge archive of recordings (Highly recommend spending an afternoon scrolling through!)

On a sad note, the Gorilla Store sadly closed shortly after the performance in August 2023. However, they are still selling things online at thegorillastore.com if you would like to support them!

article by:

dominic le

design by:

aya kobayashi

**EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT A PUNK**, there is a serious imperative for all musicians to care about the share of music listening and creation controlled by our capitalist reality, as presented by Mark Fischer. This is not capitalism as in commerce - but rather the reality where populations are reduced to numbers, art is reduced to prices, and cultures are funneled into trendy pieces. In this socially incellic world, most musicians will find that plucking at their heart veins for meaning is no longer as feasible as following recipe advice from the internet to get a more statistically higher picture of themselves.

There was a desire to write about punk music and what can be learned from the death of this anti-genre genre towards the maintenance of anti-capitalist practices, but upon reading *The Death and Life of Punk Music* by Dylan Clark, this thesis became duplicative. Clark's account was that the classical punk of the 70s was rapidly defeated by its purposeless negative rebellion and its contradictory need to be an anti-genre within music. These defining traits including seemingly indigestible clothes and mannerisms were in the end easily repurposed into trends and then numbers for market dick measurements. Clark noted that rising from this hopelessness was post-punk. Reflective of the perceived dullness in the singularity of this attentional deficit generation, post-punk does not need to be loud and shut down. Instead, it is nameless, lawless, and only knowingly sociable to its scene, emphasizing the purpose of punk by promoting anti-racism, anti-sexism, and environmentalism within their own community while ducking capitalism's youth whistle.

# How To Write A Godly EP

Because there's no better way to start your music career!

**Preface**: EPs are preferred because they are more unpredictable than the other options which should provide more creative range.

**Preparation**: You want a muse with exactly 532 instagram followers. Never tell them the truth and imply to them that you just don't like music.

**1. Do some background research!**

Ask around this scene that everyone talks about. Where's the cheese? Who sells it? Once you've got the fat rat in your palms, you want leverage. Before it squeaks, you want to move on to readying your next trap.

**2. Juice your inspiration**

Be it your own life, your muse, or some other sweet, moist, word farm. You know what details do for novels? They make the story feel realistic, so the nuance can shine. Music is neither here nor there. The proof is in the cheese!

**3. Make the rat write songs for you**

remystastysoop
532 followers
When you try writing an EP but you forgot to feed the rats that write it for you
View more on instagram

Why not? The rat knows the people who listen: the nuance. The rat speaks your language: the details. Well really, you don't know the people but that only makes the nuance more magical.

**4. Think hard about whether you should hire a mastering engineer**

Mastering engineers are expensive. What they do to the audio file can be generalized into the sentence "make it louder". Do we really want to include one of those? Another tip: humans are a liability and emotional. Think hard about this. A pros and cons list might help.

**5. Clean up some stuff ethically**

Look at a point form description of your operation. What properties are not punk? Can they be called post-punk instead or would that be too complicated for our target audience?

**6. No gimmick... or a gimmick?**

Gimmicks are really meaningless but in a sort of roundabout way they just make sense. There really is no meaning in your music. If you have a gimmick, try to make sure that it is new, or maybe if you're lazy, just do some classic anti-rebellion (romanticizing drug abuse, sex addiction, violence, overall lack of hygiene, etc) and call it punk! It means nothing anyways!

These are usually the necessary steps that some of the people who make it big complete. If music doesn't work out, that's okay. It is just another thing. Move on to something else?..

**Share This Article**

**Your New Favorite Thing**

**8 Rats Under $10 That'll Turn Your Songs Into The Next Anarchist Anthem**

# Post Punk Panpsychism

Punk was an ideological movement that musically progressed towards post-punk, but along its path, some claimed that it was worth preserving the sound of punk. Hardcore is to punk what hair metal is to heavy metal or Elvis impersonators are to Elvis in that it parodies its golden age. Veterans would know that this sound lost its prophesied power, but under a post-punk analysis, barring hardcore from post-punk's meaningless power seems snobby.

Now, seeing hardcore to post-hardcore reveals stabbings of the underside of resistance's progression being failure to struggle. Rites of Spring's changed from Minor Threat's rebellious formula to simply acknowledging their situation and perhaps accepting their emotions. Following emo acts describe intuitively sad or frustrating scenarios lined up for acceptance. This formula is not new but following punk's angry tradition and post-punk sense of finality feels unendingly desperate.

A surprising influence of math rock, an unsurprising seedling of post-hardcore, is minimalism in classical music. This is a tradition that breaks down the significance of individual melodies to present meaning in the texture of the sound. Ambient music replies to its predecessors by filling all gaps in sound that can be relativized by traditional standards and contextualizing itself.

In comedy, this is the audience laughing at who the comedian paints themselves to be, rather than the joke told. Maybe this is a comeback of the older jester whose role is humour for the upper abled or maybe this is a step from comedians being holistic individuals who tell jokes towards the acknowledgement that the individual is inaccessible and that the separation makes the listeners safe because no one blames the jester, but you are allowed to blame the comedian for having bad taste; The world putting framing jokes versus the comedian framing jokes.

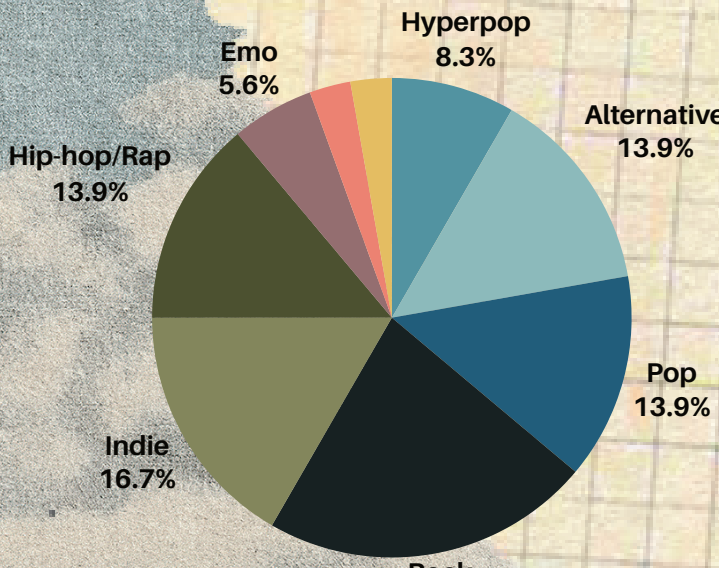
Many sources **wink** will tell you that the modern day rage is gloom which seems like from the past period we are going from rebellion to acceptance and from agency to conformity but gloom does not need to be a contrast to rebellion or agency.

**Rebellions when they are there are an imbalance of people on either side.**

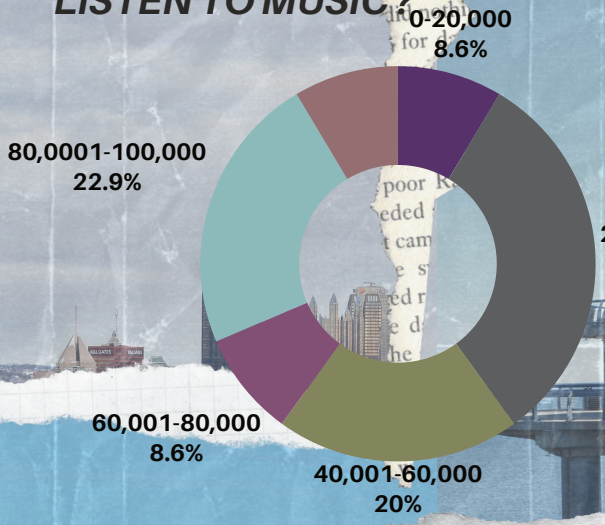
# CARE TO LEND AN EAR?

***ON DECEMBER 11, 2023***, DEMO launched a survey that attempted to record the listening patterns and Spotify Wrapped results of UofT students. While the results were initially supposed to be out before 2023 ended, we thought it would be interesting to visualize last year's listening patterns, thus painting a vivid, somewhat rich picture of the UofT student body's listening habits (also, we kind of forgot about this survey, to be perfectly candid)

## WHAT WAS YOUR NO. 1 GENRE?




## HOW MANY MINUTES DID YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC?



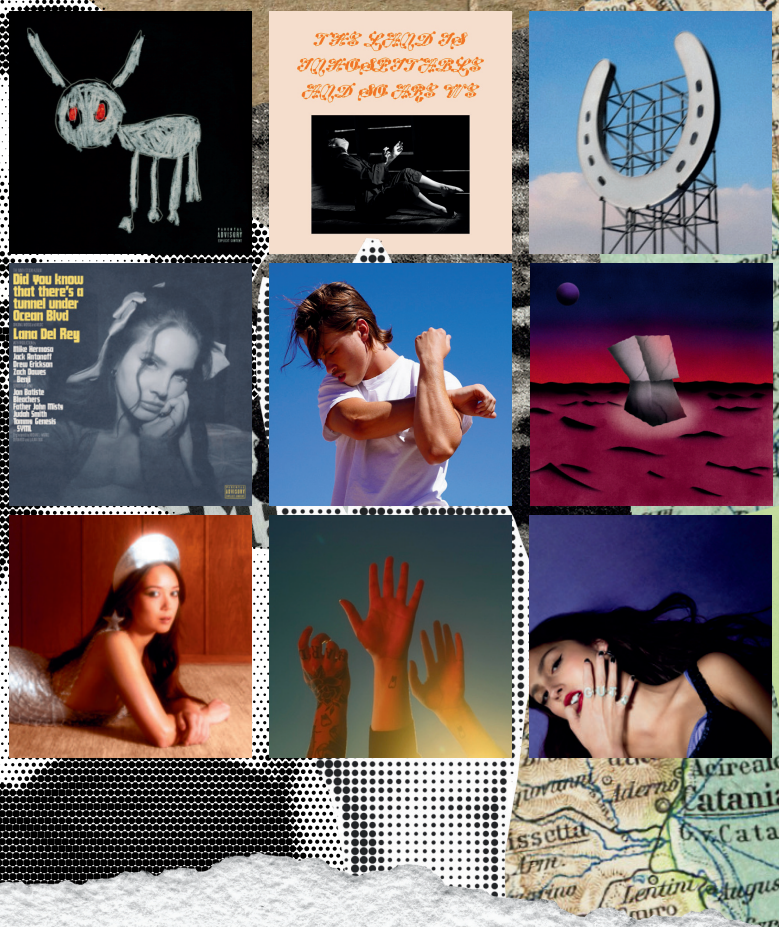

## How did you discover music in 2023? What Do you feel when you discover music?

IRL FRIENDS, TWITTER, FANTANO, RYM, INTERVIEWS WITH ARTISTS I LIKE. EXCITEMENT, JOY FOR THE TIME WE LIVE IN AND HOW MUCH POSSIBILITY HASNT YET BEEN EXPLORED IN MUSIC. SOMETIMES I GET SAD THOUGH, CUZ SOMETHING WILL EXECUTE AN IDEA I HAD THAT I COULD NEVER HAVE EXECUTED THE WAY THE SONG DOES

USUALLY I DISCOVER MUSIC THROUGH ASKING MY FRIENDS OR SEEING WHAT'S BEING RECOMMENDED ONLINE/FROM MUSIC PUBLICATIONS. I TEND TO BE PRETTY STAGNANT SOMETIMES IN MY MUSIC LISTENING AND WILL END UP LISTENING TO THE SAME FEW ALBUMS FOR A WHILE. SO LISTENING TO NEW MUSIC IS LIKE GETTING OUT OF THAT RUT AND REMEMBERING WHY I ENJOY LISTENING TO MUSIC SO MUCH IN THE FIRST PLACE.

"I WOULD LISTEN TO MY FAVOURITE SONGS/ALBUMS AND THEN TURN ON AUTOPLAY TO SEE WHAT IS RECOMMENDED FOR ME. I FEEL VERY INSPIRED WHEN I DISCOVER MUSIC, IT DRIVES MY CREATIVE PROCESS AND EVEN CONTRIBUTES TO MY DAY-TO-DAY MOOD. I LOVE HOW A SONG CAN ALWAYS CHANGE HOW YOU FEEL IN A PARTICULAR MOMENT."

## COMMON ALBUMS APPEARING IN TOP 3s:



# UofT Sound town

We asked you, yes YOU! Where in the world (North America) Spotify pinpointed your taste. Based on extensive research (Reddit), here are the wildly broad, likely incorrect assumptions we made about UofT's little ol' sound town (village, really).

Berkeley, CA

Berkeley: 19.2%

Associated w/: Pop, summery vibes, NewJeans

Santa Cruz, CA

Santa Cruz: 19.2%

Associated w/: Alt-rock, Doc Martens, Cocteau Twins

San Luis Obispo, CA

San Luis Obispo: 3%

Associated w/: Alternative, Out-of-the-box, Tyler, the Creator

Burlington, VT

Burlington: 30.7%

Associated w/: Indie-pop, Rustic vibes, Noah Kahan

Provo, UT

Provo: 7.7%
Associated w/:
Unapologetically Pop,
Small-Town Narratives,
Taylor Swift

Pittsburgh, PA

Pittsburgh: 3%
Associated w/: Midwest
Emo and Metal, Cozy
Sweaters, Deftones

Madison: 7.7%
Associated w/:
Alternative-folk,
Twangy melancholy,
The Mountain Goats

Madison, WI

Flagstaff, AZ

Kingston, ON

Eugene, OR

Kingston: 3%
Associated w/: Rock,
Canadian-as-all-heck,
The Tragically Hip

Eugene: 3%
Associated w/: hip-hop,
Underground, Earl Sweatshirt

Flagstaff: 3%
Associated w/:
Alt/Indie, 2014
Tumblr-coded, The
Strokes

thank you!
-from demo
and the
Yoo-Kobayashi dynasty

# CREDITS

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**YOU CAN'T TELL, BUT I'M NOT REALLY HERE: AN ODE TO 6DOGS**

**UOFT SOUND TOWN**

**FINAL THANK YOU!**

**EDITING:**

**SCIENCE, LOVE, SIOUXSIE SIOUX, AND OTHER THINGS MY DAD TAUGHT ME** BY RAE JOHNSTON

**HOW INSTA STORIES CHANGED MY LIFE** BY JEANNE POLOCHANSKY

**ECOTONE ORCHESTRA V.S. UN-NOWEN-NO: LIVE FROM THE GORILLA STORE** BY JONAH PAGE

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**ECOTONE ORCHESTRA V.S. UN-NOWEN-NO: LIVE FROM THE GORILLA STORE** BY JONAH PAGE

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**FRIENDS I'VE MADE THROUGH TALKING ABOUT MUSIC (AND HOW YOU CAN DO IT TOO)** BY FINCH STRUB

**POST-PUNK PANPSYCHISM** BY DOMINIC LE

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**SERENDIPITY IN LOVE** BY NATHAN AGUSTIN

**LETTING MUSIC HAPPEN** BY HAYDEN ZAHARY

**LADY LUCK IN LOST MUSIC: THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF ARCHIVING**

**POST-PUNK PANSYCHISM** BY DOMINIC LE

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**AND THE BEAT GOES ON** BY XARNAH STEWART

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